United Nations A/56/PV.8

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

8th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 26 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Vento (Italy): As I am taking the floor for the first time at this fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, I wish to express the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you, Mr. President, at the helm of our proceedings, and to assure you of the full cooperation of Italy in the exercise of your high functions.

The annual report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Organization traditionally sets the tone for the work of the General Assembly. It provides us with an authoritative opportunity to address unsettled questions from the previous session and urgent new matters that have emerged since.

This is especially true today, when the General Assembly finds itself deliberating under the pressures created by the events of 11 September, which took an unfathomable toll in human life and material damage. The target of that monstrous crime was the city that hosts the United Nations and has become synonymous with it. In this context, the attacks, which disrupted our normal programme of work, were also directed against the United Nations, inflicting a grievous injury to the respect owed this universal forum and causing grave offence to all of our countries.

These events must be accounted for in the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and in the assessment and future set-up of the Organization's activity, and a special debate has been called for on measures to combat international terrorism, which is scheduled to begin on 1 October.

Against this background, the traditional format of the report (A/56/1), which is subdivided according to the four main operative sectors of the United Nations, this year seems more appropriate than ever. In fact, the continued pursuit of related objectives, and their prompt and far-reaching realization, seems to represent the principal means of eliminating the root causes of the new, indiscriminate threat represented by international terrorism.

For the period in question, the report describes significant progress by the United Nations in the field of peace and security. Steps forward have undoubtedly been taken in enacting the types of reform in peacekeeping operations embraced by the Brahimi report. Italy wholeheartedly supports the growing focus on conflict prevention and feels that the Secretary-General's recommendations in last June's report should be fully implemented by Member States and the main organs of the United Nations.

Prevention, conflict resolution and reconstruction are three elements of a continuous process and cannot be addressed separately: an integrated approach should permeate the Organization's culture of peace. The Secretary-General's report reflects this sentiment in the close connection it forges between peacekeeping and

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-54745 (E)

peace-building actions. There is a growing need for a comprehensive vision and coordination between the various phases of the response to a conflict situation. Even the mandates of operations authorized by the Security Council should, as a matter of course, contemplate not just an exit strategy for the peacekeeping forces deployed, but also a range of activities for reconstruction and the reintegration and resettlement of former combatants, as well as institution-building in the country concerned.

This imperative need, which is now generally recognized, should promote more effective coordination among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as between them and the Secretariat and specialized agencies, funds and programmes. To this end, the spread of an integrated and multidimensional culture among the personnel of the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes should be actively promoted through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, fully utilizing the potential of the United Nations System Staff College in Turin.

The report's in-depth analysis on the implementation of commitments in the humanitarian sector reflects the Organization's ongoing commitment to this area, despite insufficient financial resources. Conflict, crisis situations and natural catastrophes are all dramatic realities, whose lowest common denominator is the suffering they cause civilian populations.

Humanitarian assistance is one of the most important sectors. Italy's cooperation activity in this area is, to a growing extent, channelled through the United Nations system, as well as through non-governmental organizations, by means of the centralized cooperation of local government, in addition to the substantial support provided by the Brindisi logistics base, whose important role is integrated into humanitarian and peacekeeping activities in a timely and effective manner.

In the field of development cooperation, the international community's renewed attention to the fight against poverty and in support of the economic and social advancement of developing countries is demonstrated by developments noted in the report, such as the attention that the Economic and Social Council high-level segment dedicated to Africa last July; the New African Initiative, adopted in Lusaka by the Organization of African Unity; the results of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which adopted the Brussels Declaration and an action plan for 2001-2010; and the greater cohesiveness of the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In this context, the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place in Monterrey next March — the preparatory work for which is well under way — will be crucial. Accordingly, it would be advisable for the Organization and those of its agencies that deal with this area to increase their efforts to optimize resources and stimulate greater synergy in the collective commitment to development and poverty eradication.

Among the other results of the renewed efforts at fostering coordination, the strong commitment to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS must be underlined. The Secretary-General's involvement has made a key contribution to the creation of a new global fund for HIV/AIDS and other contagious illnesses. The Fund was launched by the G-8 member countries jointly with him in Genoa last July, in the presence of many African heads of State, who, on that same occasion, were able to elaborate on the New African Initiative, which had been adopted a few days earlier in Lusaka.

Turning to the issue of the digital divide, which has been the subject of debate in recent days during the high-level dialogue on cooperation through partnership, the impetus provided by the Secretary-General has allowed a greater convergence of the initiatives thus far undertaken. This convergence was strongly promoted by the Italian presidency of the G-8, most visibly through the Naples Conference on E-Government last March. We are heartened by the decision to establish an information and communications technology (ICT) task force — a decision that was made following intensive coordination with the G-8 Digital Opportunity Task (DOT) Force, whose final report was adopted on the occasion of the Genoa Summit.

The structure of the Secretary-General's report rightly illuminates the essential link between an international legal order and respect for human rights.

As it stated in the final communiqué of the G-8 Summit in Genoa, Italy is convinced that open, democratic and accountable systems of governance, based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, are preconditions for sustainable development and robust growth. In the light of this conviction, in July 1998 my country hosted in Rome the Conference that gave birth to the Statute of the International Criminal Court, and hopes that the 60 ratifications it requires to enter into effect can be obtained as soon as possible. More than ever, the tragic events of this sad month of September have shown us the urgent need for a judicial forum that is internationally recognized and has universal value, and where the perpetrators of heinous criminal acts against humanity can be adjudicated by the community of States.

Last week's tragic events also lent even greater urgency to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was opened for signature last December in Palermo. The entry into force of the Convention and of its three Protocols will constitute the first valid response in the fight against every aspect of the phenomenon of crime. Such crime knows no borders and may be one of the negative consequences of globalization. Fed by trafficking in drugs and firearms and by the smuggling of illegal immigrants, this phenomenon must be countered with effective legal instruments.

In this framework, we must encourage the United Nations system to envisage an even more extensive inclusion of strong human rights awareness, crime prevention, criminal justice and institution-building components in peacekeeping operations.

The Organization's activity over the past 12 months should clearly be assessed also in the light of the Millennium Declaration. That document set out a precise itinerary, especially considering the delicate political balances that had to be considered. The road map just issued by the Secretariat proposes the objective of lending greater predictability to the path we will follow in the years to come. We must make it our task to render this path navigable and ensure that it is wide enough to allow all of us to follow it with determination.

The activities of the United Nations over the past year will thus constitute an important point of reference in our debate, here in the General Assembly, on the follow-up to the September 2000 Declaration by the heads of State and Government.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): First of all, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and for its succinct introduction this morning. The report is concise and highlights the major activities of the Organization since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration last year. The six chapters of the report focus on the major issues facing the international community at the turn of the new century. My delegation believes that the report constitutes a good basis for our debate here in plenary on this item, as well as in the upcoming debates in the main committees.

Since most of the questions raised in the report will be touched upon in the general debate that is to be held in November, as well as in the committees, today I should like to address the following points.

First, with respect to the Millennium Declaration, Members of the United Nations started the new millennium by declaring at the highest level their common vision of a more just, sustainable and peaceful world, in which the benefits of development and globalization would advance the livelihood of every nation on this planet; and they adopted concrete, time-bound objectives aimed at achieving these noble aims.

In the past 12 months, the implementation of the goals set out in the Declaration has been — as can be seen from the report — and will remain a cross-cutting objective of special importance in all of the activities of the United Nations system. For that reason, this theme was rightly given special focus throughout the report. I should like to specifically point out that the General Assembly itself and the Economic and Social Council have set good examples in this regard. We express the hope that this focus on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration will be consistent and that this and subsequent sessions of the Assembly and of its the subsidiary bodies will be role models for other United Nations bodies.

Let me turn now to the goal of achieving peace and security. As can be seen in the report, the United Nations has been actively involved in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. The United Nations should be commended for its efforts in these areas, where — as we all know — much depends not only on the efforts of the international community but also on the prevailing

political, economic and social environments, as well as on the political will of whichever parties are involved or in conflict.

The specific recommendations of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict contained in his report should be widely supported, and measures need to be taken to implement them. Progress has been registered in some of the areas of conflict prevention and peace-building. Here, my delegation would like to commend the role of the United Nations, especially of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, in promoting the peaceful transition of the East Timorese people to self-government. As a result of the activities of the United Nations, the East Timorese are gradually taking charge of Government responsibilities. In this regard, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that a prudent approach is needed in the post-election period to safeguard the international community's considerable and successful investment in East Timor's future.

Turning to the question of disarmament, my delegation would like to express its support for the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Though the Conference did not achieve consensus on all issues, it made a significant first step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in these categories of weapons. The efforts in this regard should be continued.

One of the issues that is arousing grave concern in the international community is the question of deploying missile defences. In this connection, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General that if this question is not addressed in the context of maintaining strategic stability, it could threaten not only current bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements but also ongoing and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Speaking of the non-proliferation efforts of the United Nations, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, especially its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, for recently organizing in Sapporo, Japan, a meeting of non-governmental experts on ways and means of strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The meeting concluded that further concrete steps need to be taken at the international level to institutionalize that status.

The Millennium Declaration has put forward a long-term agenda for sustainable development. It will come to fruition if the efforts of all United Nations bodies as a whole are coordinated to this end, and if existing and new national and international programmes serve this goal. In this regard, my delegation looks forward to a fruitful and constructive discussion on the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. We hope that the road map will serve both as an umbrella and as an impetus for concrete actions to implement the Millennium Declaration.

In the period under review, a number of important events have taken place in the area of development cooperation, such as the holding of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, and its special session on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The importance of these events cannot be overemphasized, and efforts must now be made to implement their decisions and recommendations within the broad framework established by the Declaration. The special session on children, which had to be postponed to a later date, should be held as soon as possible. My delegation believes that the remaining issues could be resolved on the basis of realism and bearing in mind the pressing basic needs of children.

I would like to commend the positive role played by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in addressing the vulnerabilities and difficulties faced by landlocked developing countries. With their support, the Fifth Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions was held this year. One of the outcomes was a recommendation to hold an international meeting on transit transport cooperation in 2003. My delegation believes that holding such a meeting could make a significant contribution to the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Millennium Declaration. We express the hope that the United Nations, particularly UNCTAD and UNDP, will continue to extend their valuable support for the efforts of the landlocked and

transit developing countries to enhance and facilitate their transit transportation, which is vital for accelerating their trade and development.

According to UNCTAD, landlocked developing countries, the majority of which are also the least developed countries, on average spend over 14 per cent of their export earnings on payments for transport and insurance services, while the average for other developing and developed countries is only 8.8 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively. This and some other objective factors impose a heavy burden on landlocked developing countries, substantially reducing or altogether negating whatever competitive advantage they may have in the world economy. The questions of the elimination of poverty, development and stability all depend to a certain extent on overcoming this natural, objective obstacle through cooperation. It is for this reason that the group asked the Secretary-General to reflect the questions and problems of this group of countries in his annual report. It is quite unfortunate that this year's report does not reflect the problems of this group of countries. My delegation expresses the hope that, bearing in mind the importance of this question in implementing the provisions of the Millennium Declaration, it will receive due reflection in next year's and subsequent reports.

On the subject of the fight against international terrorism, my delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General that one of the strengths of the Organization is its capacity to adjust to changing international conditions. This 11 September was one such landmark. On that day, the world was shocked and outraged by the heinous terrorist attacks in New York, our host city, and in Washington D.C., which caused the loss of thousands of human lives, injury and destruction.

The Security Council has rightly described terrorism as "a threat to international peace and security" (*resolution 1368 (2001), para. 1*) and called upon all States to work together urgently to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors. The Council also called on the international community to redouble its efforts to prevent and to suppress terrorist acts. The first resolution adopted at this session of the Assembly, on 12 September, was also a resolution in the same spirit.

My delegation believes that such acts of barbarism can only be considered crimes against the peace and security of mankind. The United Nations can and should play a greater role in the fight against international terrorism. As paragraph 224 of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1) underlines, in the past year, "83 ratifications of, and accessions to, the 12 existing global conventions for the prevention and suppression of international terrorism" have been registered. This broadens the legal basis of the cooperation of States in combating different manifestations, such as the hijacking of planes and vessels, the taking of hostages, terrorist bombing and the financing of terrorist activities. The push for universal accession to these conventions should be continued.

The tragic events of 11 September have also demonstrated that the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological terrorist attacks is real. This should give delegations impetus to finalize the draft convention against nuclear terrorism, the text of which has been 98 per cent ready since 1998. My delegation expresses the hope that consideration of the question of international terrorism in early October in this plenary will give the needed political impetus to promoting further the elaboration of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

In conclusion, allow me to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on his unanimous re-election for a second term as Secretary-General of our Organization. His dedicated leadership and manifold skills have earned the respect of Member States and his efforts to find "constructive solutions to the fundamental problems of our age" have ensured the support of all Members.

My delegation is also confident that, under your leadership, Mr. President, this Assembly will take concrete measures to achieve the objective of creating a more developed, sustainable and peaceful world. My delegation will do its utmost to help you and the Assembly to achieve these results.

Mr. Wurth (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are confident that you will promote multilateral cooperation at this crucial time.

The terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania will require the United Nations work to be seen in light of the lessons of 11 September. On behalf of my authorities and compatriots, I extend the condolences of the people of Luxembourg to the

people of the United States and in particular to the families of those who were murdered on 11 September. We also extend our sympathy to the wounded.

The terrible killing of that tragic day was deeply horrifying. There is no justification for it. Such murders affect our Organization and all its Members as deeply as they do our host city and country. If we falter now, we will be giving in to the terrorists' fundamental aim of rejecting the common humanity that we defend. The attack was an assault on the strongest of States, but it was on us all because it was against a Member of the United Nations. That country can count on our solidarity.

Terrorism is the very antithesis of the work of the United Nations and of all peoples of the world. We the peoples seek greater fraternity, not the death of civilians and blind destruction. Our Organization can react only by strengthening its collective resolve. The struggle against terrorism will be the focus of our efforts and next week's debate will be an opportunity to identify appropriate action based on in-depth analysis.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The impressive work of the Organization described in the excellent report of the Secretary-General before us today must certainly be intensified. The achievements we have made since the launching of the reform of the Organization will be our tools for eliminating the remaining shortcomings. The work of this past year was guided by the Millennium Declaration and its follow-up, including the recent publication of the highly useful programme for its implementation. We also have a very heavy schedule, with many special sessions, conferences and preparatory meetings. All of these efforts are more relevant now than ever before.

While it may be true that undeniable progress has been made on some international issues, shortfalls have also been identified in the clear and straightforward account of the Secretary-General, who makes us aware of our collective responsibility. I should like to focus on a few points in particular.

The Secretary-General is right to stress the complexity of conflicts that infringe on international peace and security and the tragic fact that civilians are often their first victims. Protecting civilians, women and children in particular, in areas that are threatened or affected by armed conflict is a priority need. Conflict prevention will be the main instrument for doing so. The Secretary-General's high-quality analysis of this issue has inspired a substantive discussion in the Security Council and in the General Assembly. We must follow it up with action.

An integrated approach is needed to avoid new or to prevent the resurgence of old tensions, as we know from experience on the ground. The participation of heads of humanitarian and development agencies in some Security Council debates has made a significant contribution. It is encouraging to note that the current focus on prevention, the cessation of hostilities, peace-building and development has been increasingly validated.

Restructuring in the area of peacekeeping has registered significant progress. The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo are operations whose success is founded on the high degree of integration of their various components. The presence of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in tandem with intensive diplomatic efforts, has enabled the withdrawal of foreign troops and the launching of the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Among the other horizontal challenges facing the international community, progress has been made on the trade in raw diamonds. The dangers linked to the illicit traffic in light weapons, which so often fall into the hands of terrorists and criminals, remain acute. Such weapons kill more than any other in the world today.

The new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the competent and dedicated team from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have worked to restructure that essential service in order to allow it to cope with a humanitarian situation that is not improving. We must remember that civilians, women and children in particular, suffer most in emergency situations that are often prolonged or recurring. While refugees enjoy protected status and assistance, persons displaced within their own country are often left destitute, the victims of political considerations that prevent recognition of their fate within the international community.

The international response to natural disasters is being improved through better preparation and adequate civilian management of crises. It should be noted that humanitarian personnel often have to fear for their own safety and the serious loss of life among them over the past 12 months is deplorable.

Donors meeting informally within the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group are closely involved with leaders in the United Nations system. The humanitarian tragedy in Afghanistan, compounded by decades of civil war and by drought, is a cause of major concern today. Luxembourg is actively involved in the international humanitarian effort through the European Union and the United Nations and through its direct support to the affected population. Luxembourg's humanitarian assistance budget continues to grow, along with its financing of development activities.

At the Millennium Summit, we reaffirmed our determination to move ahead in many areas relating to development. In the wake of the follow-up conferences to the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, we must set ambitious goals and stress our collective responsibility to attain them.

Poverty in conditions that run contrary to respect for human beings is an important cause of conflict. It should be fought by every means. The Conference on the Least Developed Countries of last May was a confirmation of solidarity with the poorest peoples. Preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development are being carried out in full, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held in one year.

We welcome the fact that those involved in development, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, are sharing their experiences and coordinating their work. The restructuring within various funds and programmes has been courageous and necessary. This should be translated into greater renewed confidence in these bodies, whose work in development on the ground is essential. It is by working in partnership that the international community will serve sustainable human development — a responsible development that respects people, their choices and their natural and cultural environments. Political leaders must also shoulder their share of the burden, particularly in combating corruption and in setting up transparent structures.

In 2000, official development assistance from Luxembourg was 0.72 per cent of our gross national product. Thus, we have gone beyond the target set by the United Nations. We are seeking to bring it to 1 per cent.

Only a community based on the rule of law and the acceptance of common rules can provide a stable basis for international and national life. To disregard recognized fundamental laws is to be banished from the international community. An international legal order is developing, and law requires that it be applied. Crimes against humanity — and the acts of 11 September, which have been described as such throughout the world — should not escape justice.

Luxembourg has ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We believe in the dual potential of this court for bringing justice and sending a message of dissuasion. A strong international law that is implemented vigorously takes nothing away from the principle of legitimate defence. On the contrary, it encompasses and strengthens it. The criminal courts that the Security Council has put in place are already contributing to healing wounds, and they require moral and financial support. But international efforts will be truly effective only if they are backed up by the building of the rule of law at the national level.

These thoughts bring us back to the struggle against terrorism. I shall come back to and build on this question further during the debate next week.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We have before us the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. It covers areas of work that have been accomplished, and it identifies some of the obstacles encountered and challenges that we still face. My delegation expresses our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report.

Last year during the historic Millennium Assembly our heads of State and Government set ambitious goals for us, which are encapsulated in the Millennium Declaration. The clarion call was, and still is, the need to create a better world for all. It was with a great sense of optimism that we welcomed the new millennium that was to herald a new era of international cooperation. We collectively agreed on development targets with specific time frames.

We are convinced that the tragic events that occurred in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania will provide new impetus to efforts by Member States to address the phenomenon of international terrorism. The finalization of a comprehensive convention is pivotal for the success of our collective action to prevent and suppress international terrorism. But, as the South African Government has stated:

> "Whatever the pain the world may be going through, we should avoid the temptations of racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and any other forms of prejudice and discrimination that the recent World Conference against Racism so eloquently warned against."

In the Declaration, among many other important issues, we committed ourselves to rid humanity of the scourge of poverty. We agreed that peace and security should be pursued more rigorously internationally, and that the international community would unite in its resolve to tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS. We collectively expressed our concern about the obstacles that developing countries face in mobilizing resources needed to finance sustainable development, and about adopting a policy of duty-free and quota-free access for all exports from the least developed countries to developed country markets.

In Africa, in our quest to reach the international development targets that we agreed to, African leaders responded by pledging collectively to put the continent on a path of sustainable development though the New African Initiative. African leaders have committed themselves to the promotion of human rights and good governance. We therefore welcome the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2000 to assist parliaments, justice systems and electoral systems, as reported by the Secretary-General. We are also heartened by the capacity-building, resource mobilization, service delivery and community empowerment initiatives going on in 37 countries.

In Africa, we have given serious thought to the fundamental questions underlying the problem of the huge disparities in development between the North and the South. We have come to realize that we, as developing countries, can do much to help ourselves before we engage the developed countries on the important steps that they will have to take to support our efforts. In a way we have reversed the debate around conditionalities. We have approached the developed world and the international development community in search of partnerships that will ensure that our efforts are sustained by appropriate support measures. During this session my delegation will actively engage in the deliberations of the General Assembly and its different committees in promoting this partnership with the continent of Africa on the basis of the principles, priorities, objectives and programmes identified in the New African Initiative.

My delegation supports the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General to bring greater awareness and acceptance by the international community of the need for the prevention of armed conflict. We also welcome efforts to gear the Organization and all its organs for a culture of prevention. Efforts to improve the conflict prevention capacities of the Organization coincide with a growing realization by African leaders and people that the continent's destiny must be driven by Africa itself.

South Africa believes that the complex challenges facing the United Nations today in the resolution and management of conflict require that the Secretariat be adequately structured and has sufficient resources. My delegation supported and will continue to support the reform processes initiated by the Secretary-General and informed by the Brahimi report and the efforts of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. In our view, these reforms will go a long way in improving the image of the United Nations in this sphere of its work. However, my delegation would like to reiterate its position that no amount of reform of the United Nations peacekeeping support and management mechanisms will suffice if they are not backed up by the requisite political and financial support to ensure that peacekeeping succeeds. This is particularly important for the role of the United Nations in African conflicts.

Over the past year, the United Nations has again illustrated its immense worth as a provider of humanitarian assistance. The Secretary-General's report provides testimony on the millions of people, affected by conflicts and natural disasters worldwide, whose lives have been positively affected by assistance provided by the United Nations. My delegation is pleased to note that the United Nations is continuing to improve the coordination of its humanitarian activities, which allows better use of scarce funding and prevents costly overlaps at the operational level.

The plight of internally displaced persons, especially in Africa, continues to be of major concern to my delegation. This concern is underscored by the serious gaps that were identified in the United Nations response to internally displaced persons by the review missions of the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement. We welcome the creation of a unit for internally displaced persons in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and hope it will promptly begin to address those gaps.

While more can surely be done to assist those in need of humanitarian assistance, we recognize the impediments faced by the United Nations and its agencies. Foremost among these is the issue of underfunding of humanitarian actions. My delegation strongly supports the Secretary-General's call for immediate and realistic funding, especially for the so-called forgotten emergencies such as Angola, Somalia and the Great Lakes region.

In September 2002, South Africa will host the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is our hope that the Summit will reinvigorate the commitment of the international community to the goals of sustainable development. If we are to give effect to a new vision of sustainable development, the Summit should adopt a concrete and pragmatic programme of action for the implementation of Agenda 21 in the next decade. We believe that one of the biggest threats to sustainable development is the persistence of poverty and the widening gap between rich and poor. Therefore, the eradication of poverty should be the overriding concern of the Summit. My delegation would like to inform the Assembly that the regional meeting of the Southern African Development Community in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was held last week in Mauritius, decided to propose that the theme of the Summit should be "Poverty eradication as a key to sustainable development".

We have to continue our endeavours to meet the challenge we set ourselves in the Millennium Declaration, that of waging war against poverty and underdevelopment, by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations Information and Communications Technology Task Force. We agree that the Task Force will harness the power of information and communications technologies for advancing the millennium development goals.

The International Conference on Financing for Development, which is to be held in Mexico in 2002, is one more attempt at the intergovernmental level to mobilize resources to combat poverty and underdevelopment. We recognize that these national and international efforts require genuine partnership and engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

We note that the eighth session of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court has commenced its work, and we call on all participants to work expeditiously to resolve the outstanding issues and to finalize the additional instruments relating to the practical arrangements necessary for the effective functioning of the Court. We are encouraged by the growing number of signatures and ratifications of the Statute, which is indicative of the universal acceptance of the Court and which leaves no doubt that its Statute will soon enter into force. My delegation also wishes to express its satisfaction with the significant advances that the International Tribunals for both Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have made during the past year, resulting from the implementation of major reforms aimed at enhancing the efficiency of operations in both Tribunals. We also note with concern the lack of sufficient resources, which has so far hindered the establishment and operation of the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's excellent reports to the Security Council. His personal attention to particular crises embodies the will of the Organization to better the human condition. Clearly, it is incumbent upon the Security Council to minimize the impact of sanctions on civilian populations. The devastating effect of a decade of sanctions on the Iraqi population illustrates the need to improve the Organization's ability to achieve balance between its twin imperatives of maintaining international peace and security and of improving people's quality of life.

If the United Nations is to remain true to its founding principles, the inalienable rights of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara and of other peoples which still suffer domination and oppression must be addressed as an urgent responsibility.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the introduction of his concise annual report on the work

of the Organization, and by congratulating him on his well-deserved re-election. His intelligent and effective leadership will enable the United Nations to remain the focal point for harmonizing the efforts of Member States to attain our common purposes in line with the principles of the San Francisco Charter, which we have all undertaken to respect.

The world today faces problems that transcend national borders. These are threats that require concerted, unified action. The United Nations is the ultimate multilateral forum, and is the only place where we can properly deal with such threats in accordance with international law. At the Millennium Assembly, heads of State or Government rightly resolved to make the United Nations the best possible mechanism for promoting the development of all the world's peoples and for combating poverty, ignorance and disease. They also agreed that we must all fight violence, injustice, crime and terrorism — a particularly relevant issue in the light of the tragic, cruel and despicable events that recently occurred in the United States of America. Here, I shall merely reiterate the deeply felt condolences of the Government and the people of Ecuador. The role of our Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security is a basic component of its responsibilities and it has shown that in its intervention in armed conflicts in various parts of the world through peacekeeping operations, some of which have been successful and others which have taught us lessons that must be applied in the future.

Disarmament, on one hand, and conflict prevention, on the other hand, are two sides of the same problem. If potential conflicts are resolved in time through peaceful methods, then the States involved will have no reason to enter an arms race. Disarmament will be easier when solutions are found through dialogue and the necessary negotiations and agreements.

Last August, Ecuador assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. I hope that my country will be able to contribute to providing impetus to end the paralysis of such an important organ. In any event, it will be guided by the consistent principles of its foreign policy in this regard and its deeply felt commitment to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The Secretary-General states that in the Millennium Declaration our leaders agreed to proceed with the urgent task of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and of reducing the risks of small arms and light weapons and landmines. Unfortunately, the indications are not very encouraging on the first score. We are not moving in the right direction there. The possible resumption of nuclear testing, the eventual deployment of defence missiles or the use of outer space for military purposes can have a negative impact on disarmament and on the non-proliferation regime that has been built up through lengthy and patient negotiations.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which recently concluded in New York without reaching the desired results, is nevertheless one step forward in the process of strengthening peace and internal and international security.

On anti-personnel mines, I wish to state with particular satisfaction that Ecuador has discharged its commitments undertaken within the framework of the Ottawa Treaty and has reached the target set for going to the third meeting of States parties to that international instrument, just held in Managua, without any stockpiles of mines. In August this year, as a first phase, using our own resources, we destroyed 101,458 anti-personnel mines, and just a few days ago, on 11 September, we destroyed an additional 154,344 mines, thanks to the external assistance channelled through the Organization of American States.

With regard to the economic issues analysed in the Secretary-General's report, I will focus on the priority importance my country attaches to the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico. This is an excellent opportunity to define a new worldwide agreement that must encompass the adequate mobilization of internal resources, larger and more stable financial flows, an international trading system that offers better access to large world markets for products from developing countries, effective and lasting solutions to the very serious problem of external indebtedness, which holds hostage the economic future of many developing countries, and an integral approach to systemic issues, which would allow for broader participation by developing countries in decision-making in international economic affairs

and which promotes the establishment of a new international financial structure.

This Conference will also be a challenge to the effectiveness of the United Nations in the consideration of economic and social issues, and it cannot be merely the repetition of age-old hopes. It must be a step forward in international cooperation and in the adoption of realistic policies and measures that will help eradicate poverty and build societies that are more just and show more solidarity and that give true content to democratic principles and human rights.

Indeed, the promotion and the defence of human rights and the almost completed commitment to the decolonization process are two major achievements of our Organization. The international covenants relating to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights stem from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles contained in the Charter. In addition, there are other agreements and conventions to protect the rights of women, children and the disabled, for the elimination of racial discrimination and against torture. The imminent entry into force of the International Criminal Court guarantees that the long arm of international law will reach those responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity and those who became executioners and tyrants of their own people.

Although, as the Secretary-General notes, the United Nations must continue to work hard to reduce the gap between human rights norms and applications thereof, it is equally true that universalization of human rights is now an important link in the history of the Organization and of its commitment to build a more just and humane world.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): At the outset, allow me to warmly congratulate the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and inspiring introduction of his annual report, as well as for his achievements of this past year.

We are happy to work with him during his second term as Secretary-General, and we renew our support for his constant efforts aimed at enhancing the Organization's effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

While recognizing the complexities of the tasks facing the Organization, the annual report presents an informative review of the various activities of the United Nations system, as well as of the efforts made to find constructive solutions to the fundamental problems of our increasingly interdependent world.

The Millennium Declaration and the "road map" for its implementation have set up a broad and substantial agenda for our future common work.

Romania recognizes the United Nations role as an instrument of global cooperation in the pursuit of common objectives and remains committed to fulfilling its share of responsibility in this endeavour.

From this perspective, while commending the report and its findings, I would like to put forward some comments.

Due to the extraordinary circumstances we are working under during this session of the General Assembly, we consider that the international community must dedicate itself to stopping the recent trend towards a dramatic increase in violence and terrorist acts, and we welcome the debate scheduled for next week.

The human catastrophe, which saddened the United States and the United Nations host city, was a tragedy shared by the whole of humanity. There are not enough words to condemn terrorism and fanaticism. We cannot afford ever again to pay a price in innocent lives as a result of horrible acts of terror such as those that have been perpetrated. That is why the international community must act immediately and resolutely. In this context, I would like to inform the Assembly that on 19 September, the Parliament of Romania endorsed the decision of the Romanian National Security Council to make Romania's air, ground and maritime facilities available in support of actions by the United States against terrorism.

The involvement of the United Nations in peacekeeping or peace-building operations and in preventing the recurrence of conflict always was, and still is, a central priority of the Organization. We support the work under way aimed at creating secure and adequate foundations for United Nations peace operations. Next October, Romania will celebrate 10 years of uninterrupted participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Our experience confirms that the civilian and military police have an increasing role in contemporary peacekeeping operations. Consequently, Romania has decided to contribute to the international presence in Kosovo by providing a

significant number of policemen to assist in the transition from conflict to stability.

In the field of the prevention of armed conflicts, we support the recommendations in the report aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of various United Nations organs, bodies, agencies and Secretariat departments and at strengthening cooperation between the United Nations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Last spring in Bucharest, Romania hosted an Inter-Regional Forum on Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, which led to the establishment of a regional centre, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and several donor countries.

In dealing with existing conflicts, we are very much in favour of closer cooperation and dialogue between the United Nations and regional and subregional structures and organizations across a broad spectrum, from peace-building and conflict prevention to post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development. With due respect to the specific identities and experiences of all regional organizations, I would like to suggest that the relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) might be seen as a model for cooperation between the worldwide Organization and a structure with a regional vocation. Of course, there is still room for further improvement.

In this respect, I would like to recall some of the suggestions made by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is the current Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, on the occasion of his briefing to the Security Council in January this year. He stressed the importance of the establishment of an efficient information exchange mechanism on potential crises and lessons learned from common field missions; periodical joint assessments on developments in areas of mutual interest; and the participation of the two organizations in each other's meetings on topics of common concern.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan has repeatedly said, one of the greatest challenges now faced by the international community is the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable growth through appropriate policies and institution-building.

In coming months we will be involved in the final stages of preparations for two important United Nations conferences in the field of development: the International Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place in March 2002 in Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development — Rio+10 — which will take place in Johannesburg in September 2002. Both high-level events will represent important steps forward for the global community in reaching consensus on the need for an innovative approach to financing for development, as well as to sustainable development. Romania reaffirms its commitment to the concept of sustainable development and to the recommendations of the Rio Conference on environment and development; we are an active partner within the regional preparation process. In order to respond to the new challenges on development end the environment, the Romanian Government organized, during the first half of this year, a summit meeting on the environment and sustainable development in the Carpathian and Danube region and a regional conference for the evaluation of the Rio+10 process in the Central and Eastern European countries.

An important driving force of globalization is the information revolution and the emerging information society. The recent concrete initiative of the United Nations in the field of information and communications technology (ICT) — the setting up of a United Nations ICT task force, on which Romania is represented — represents an important step forward in sustaining the fight against the so-called digital divide. Romania, as part of the e-Europe Action Plan, is ready to become a regional node for United Nations initiatives in the ICT field.

In the same vein, with regard to expanding the scope of cooperation with the United Nations in specific fields, Romania took the initiative of organizing, in Bucharest last May, an United Nations procurement seminar in order to encourage Romanian enterprises to respond to United Nations procurement needs.

In conclusion, Romania supports the Secretary-General in his efforts to integrate human rights into the whole range of United Nations activities. In this context, we encourage closer cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations bodies and mechanisms and regional cooperation structures that already have valuable expertise in this field, such as the OSCE. We welcome the progress achieved by the United Nations in promoting and consolidating democracy. The resolutions adopted this year by the General Assembly

and the Commission on Human Rights, initiated by Romania and a significant number of democratic countries, provide a new perspective with regard to the contribution of the United Nations system in this field.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): I would like, first of all, to reiterate the feelings of deepest sympathy and compassion which the Government of Liechtenstein has already conveyed to our host country, the United States of America, and, in particular, to the victims of the horrendous attacks on 11 September. We have all been affected — certainly those of us who consider the city of New York our home, albeit a temporary one — but our hearts and thoughts go out, first and foremost, to the American people.

The world and this Organization are facing an enormous challenge today. We have known for quite some time about the threat of international terrorism, and yet barely anyone would have been able to predict the scope, magnitude and effect on the lives of each of us of the recent attack. The United Nations is challenged to live up to its obligations under the Charter, in particular with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. We are very grateful to the Secretary-General for his willingness to continue to serve this Organization. At no time has his leadership been more needed.

Discussions on terrorism have taken place in this building for years. They have often been controversial; they have often been emotional.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September have undoubtedly added a new dimension to these discussions: the recognition has been forced upon us that terrorism threatens the life of each and every one of us, the fabric of our societies and international peace and security. It is also daunting for us that there are no quick solutions, no easy remedies, no convenient ways out. We have been made to understand, in the most brutal of ways, that this challenge is one that requires the cooperation of all of us. This is where a sustained response from this Organization is required.

Our world has changed in many ways since the Secretary-General submitted his report on the work of the Organization on 6 September, and yet the report before us is of the highest relevance. Just as there are no quick solutions to the crisis we are facing, there are no one-track solutions, either. Bringing to justice those who committed these outrageous crimes must be our primary concern. If we are to find a long-term and sustained answer to the challenge before us, we must, however, also join forces to eradicate the root causes of terrorism.

Crisis situations can bring out the best in all of us. In our daily lives — though they have been far from normal over the past two weeks — we have noticed how the people of this city have come closer together. So has, it seems, the international community, which we all represent in here. Reactions worldwide brought forward a deep recognition of the need for enhanced international cooperation. The sometimes very audible voices critical of multilateralism fell silent and were replaced by a shared call to join forces for the common interest of all. We have to seize this momentum in order to make the world understand that the United Nations is the one forum in which we all come together to agree on policies and on ways to implement them. At this critical moment, the United Nations must play a critical role.

For several years now, on the occasion of the presentation of the report on the work of the Organization, we have spoken in favour of the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to work towards a culture of prevention, in particular the prevention of conflicts. Sadly, these efforts have taken on a burning relevance given the events of 11 September. As in every area where prevention is called for, the key issue is addressing the root causes. Recognizing and fighting the reasons which are at the heart of terrorism and make such attacks possible is in no way tantamount to condoning such acts. It is merely the expression of an intelligent and rational response to irrational acts which defy human comprehension.

The steps required to design such a powerful response are manifold; enhanced international cooperation in criminal matters and the suppression of financial flows to terrorist groups come readily to mind. I wish to pledge at this juncture the full and unequivocal support of the Government of Liechtenstein in this respect.

But we also have to redouble our efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, which further marginalizes the disenfranchised of our world; to find political solutions to long-standing situations of conflict and crisis; to strengthen the rule of law; and to prevent the outbreak of new conflicts. Above all, we have an urgent obligation to ensure that there is no gap between people of different cultures and civilizations. We have

to act in a manner which makes clear to our peoples that we understand how much we all need each other in order to create a world for our children that is truly worth living in, and that we are indeed what the Charter wanted us to be — a family of nations.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): During the general debate, a more authoritative voice than mine will extend to Mr. Han the congratulations of the Guinean delegation on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In the meantime, however, I should like to say how pleased I am to see him presiding over our work, and I wish to assure him of our cooperation.

I cannot begin consideration of the report of the Secretary-General without once again expressing our deep condolences to the people and the Government of the United States of America following the terrorist attacks of 11 September last.

My delegation joins the rest of the international community in condemning these barbaric acts, which have deeply shocked people everywhere. The horror of the tragic events shows the inhuman and cruel nature of perpetrators of international terrorism and makes it imperative for all nations to reflect together on how best they can combat this scourge.

The delegation of Guinea will lend its support to any initiative that may be agreed on following the debate on this item.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization — the first since the historic Millennium Summit — is, in the view of my delegation, an excellent document that is deserving of careful study. I should like to extend to Mr. Kofi Annan our appreciation for the many steps he has taken to enable the Organization to play its full part and thus to overcome new barriers at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Incidentally, it was recognition of his merits that led to his well-deserved re-election to head this Organization.

The past year, our Organization has made commendable efforts to implement the Political Declaration adopted by our leaders at the Millennium Summit. My delegation welcomes the road map proposed by the Secretary-General for implementing the Declaration. This important document represents a valuable tool for attaining the objectives and implementing the commitments undertaken at the Summit.

I should like to comment on a few points in the report that are of particular concern to my delegation. They relate primarily to international peace and security.

Today, as in past years, the question of peace and security is at the very heart of our concerns. Several high-level meetings have been held this past year to study in depth the causes of conflicts and to find appropriate solutions for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Brahimi report, adopted by the Security Council in parallel with the Millennium Summit, is a key document whose effective implementation will help to prevent and manage conflicts at all stages of the process.

Likewise, several working groups have arrived at relevant conclusions that will help to establish the basis for a lasting peace. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the new initiatives of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace.

My delegation is pleased to note also the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and civil society, with a view to achieving a global and integrated approach to conflict management.

Greater involvement by bodies dealing with development and humanitarian affairs within the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions can help to create a peaceful environment and to address the root causes of conflicts at the very initial stages of prevention. The highly desirable involvement of financial institutions would help to eradicate poverty, which is a significant root cause of conflicts.

We encourage sending interdisciplinary missions to zones of instability. Sending such missions is a new approach to finding integrated solutions to the multiple problems underlying instability in certain regions. In this connection, I welcome the interdisciplinary mission that visited West Africa last February. The new partnership with the States in our subregion, West Africa, will aid in lessening tension.

Here I would welcome the upcoming establishment of a United Nations Office in West

Africa to strengthen the capacities of the Organization in the areas of monitoring, early warning and the prevention of conflicts in the subregion. This diplomacy of proximity is a useful tool of preventive diplomacy. It bears repeating once again that peace-building remains the key to lasting peace. While some progress has been made in Sierra Leone, there is still a long road to travel to a lasting peace. My delegation endorses the Secretary-General's appeal to the international community for its sustained support in order to guarantee the success of the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in Sierra Leone.

As for conflict management, my delegation awaits with interest the Secretary-General's draft action plan for peace-building. We hope that the draft plan will take into account all the political, economic and social aspects necessary for peace-building.

On the topic of sanctions, my delegation fully agrees with the concept of strong, targeted sanctions. This kind of sanctions has eased tensions in some parts of the world. Recent history abundantly proves that in a crisis situation, resolutions are not always sufficient to guarantee the restoration of peace. More binding mechanisms, such as sanctions, must be contemplated. However, sanctions should not have harmful effects on innocent civilian populations.

On humanitarian issues, my delegation encourages the initiative of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in order to support action taken by operational bodies to meet the needs of displaced persons. In this way, greater attention could be given to this important group of conflict victims, which for too long has been neglected by humanitarian activities. My delegation supports efforts to establish a culture of protection for civilians threatened by armed conflict.

Other important economic, social and cultural issues have been dealt with in the work of the Organization under the guidance of the Secretary-General over this past year.

In the Millennium Declaration, our leaders decided to give special attention to Africa and called on the United Nations system to play a catalysing role in the mobilization of resources for development in Africa. In accordance with that decision, my delegation would like to reiterate the appeal made by the African heads of State and Government to organize a special session of the General Assembly to study how best to support the New African Initiative, adopted by the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka in July 2001.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate our support for the Secretary-General. We encourage him to continue in his second term the work already begun and to explore new ways and means of restoring peace and international security and strengthening international cooperation.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, please allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Han on his election to the presidency at this session of the General Assembly. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that with the President's wisdom and experience, as well as with the support and cooperation of all Member States, this session will be able to fulfil its tasks.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to the President at the last session, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his important contribution to promoting reforms and to revitalizing the work of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative annual report on the work of the United Nations, which covers all aspects of the Organization's work in the past year, the first year of the new millennium. His report deserves our full attention and consideration.

Before commenting on the Secretary-General's report, I want to reiterate China's support for submitting the issue of "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", agenda item 166, to the General Assembly for consideration. The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September have once again demonstrated that at present terrorism is a salient problem and has become a major threat to international peace and security, and that all countries in the world should strengthen cooperation and make joint efforts, for the sake of their common interests, to prevent and combat all forms of terrorist activities. The United Nations should play an important role in this regard. The Chinese delegation is going to participate actively in the relevant discussions and make its own contribution to strengthening international cooperation against terrorism.

Now I wish to share with the Assembly my views on a few issues related to the Secretary-General's report. First, I would like to speak about the question of peace. Last September, at the Millennium Summit, the United Nations made an explicit commitment, saying that it was "determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter" (*Millennium Declaration, resolution 55/2, para. 4*) and would "spare no effort to free our peoples from the scourge of war" (*ibid., para. 8*). In the past year, both the Security Council and the General Assembly have reviewed the Brahimi report and actively explored effective ways of strengthening United Nations peacekeeping capacities and effectiveness. The Secretariat has also been making adjustments and reforms accordingly. At the same time, the Secretary-General and other parties concerned have stepped up their efforts to promote peace. At present, in some regions, Africa in particular, United Nations peacekeeping efforts have achieved positive results.

However, the world is still far from peaceful. People in many countries are still living in conditions of misery because of war and disturbances. Regional conflicts are occurring one after another, due to ethnic, religious and territorial disputes, as well as to the fight for resources. A case in point here is the continuing conflict between Palestine and Israel, which has seriously undermined regional peace and stability. At the same time, such phenomena as illegal drug-trafficking and abuse, the deterioration of the environment, the spread of diseases and the refugee problem have done more notable harm to security than ever before. The rampant and unchecked activities of terrorists, separatists and extremists have caused ever greater damage and pose a new challenge to peace and security. The effective maintenance of international peace and security is, as always, an urgent and pertinent issue.

It is an indisputable fact that the overwhelming majority of today's conflicts occur in economically underdeveloped countries and regions. Extreme poverty has severely hindered the economic development and social progress of those countries and regions, causing regional disturbances and even armed conflicts. The international community must therefore strike at the roots of the problems and make earnest efforts to help developing countries solve the more fundamental issue of economic backwardness, a primary catalyst of conflict. Past experience in conflict resolution in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe has demonstrated that the most effective way to prevent and resolve conflict and to achieve lasting peace and common security is to resolve differences and disputes through dialogue, negotiation and consultation in strict accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This is the principle that must always be strictly followed in the process of preventing and resolving conflicts.

With respect to disarmament, a series of negative developments in recent years in the field of international security has led the multilateral disarmament and arms control process into a stalemate, attracting widespread attention in the international community.

China agrees with the Secretary-General's analysis in his report of the deployment of national missile defences and its consequences. The deployment of such defences will threaten current and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) not only involves the signatory countries, but also bears critical importance and relevance to maintaining global strategic balance and stability, as well as to promoting international disarmament and the non-proliferation process. The success of international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts depends on the maintenance and observance of this Treaty. At its fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, the General Assembly, by overwhelming majorities, adopted resolutions on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty, demonstrating that most countries of the world demand that the countries concerned maintain and strictly abide by the ABM Treaty. The United Nations should continue to scrutinize the development of national missile defences and take the necessary steps to prevent this dangerous situation from deteriorating any further.

The development of an anti-missile system using outer space as a base, which will extend the arms race from land and oceans to outer space, will have very serious consequences. It has therefore become urgent and timely to establish, through negotiations, an international legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For each of the past many years, the General Assembly has adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution on the prevention

of an arms race in outer space. The Conference on Disarmament should make this an issue of priority and start relevant negotiations immediately.

It is the common aspiration of people of all countries and an important task for the international community to promote the nuclear disarmament process and to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world as soon as possible. The 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was convened successfully and its Final Document provides clear guidance for the process of nuclear disarmament. The international community should take concrete steps to promote that process. The international community as a whole should also work to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. It should also remove artificial barriers so as to achieve the comprehensive prohibition and thorough destruction of those two types of weapons of mass destruction at an early date.

The question of development, in parallel with the question of peace, is another major issue facing the world today. Promoting development is an essential task for the United Nations in this new millennium. Over the past year, when all countries have been looking forward to ensuring that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people, the situation of developing countries has deteriorated rather than improved. The challenges they face have increased rather than decreased. The gap between the developing and the developed countries is widening rather than narrowing. Information poverty in the developing countries has been exacerbated.

All this has seriously bottlenecked the development of developing countries as well as the sustained development of developed countries. It has also posed a potential threat to international stability. We appreciate the new efforts of the United Nations to help countries to pursue their development goals, to launch their priority projects and to eradicate poverty. At the same time, however, we have also noticed that, compared to other fields, the United Nations input in the field of development is seriously insufficient. This situation must change.

As humanity steps into the new century, countries have placed even higher expectations in the United Nations. The United Nations must play a more active and greater role in eradicating poverty, narrowing the North-South gap and promoting universal prosperity. As the Secretary-General's report indicates,

> "If the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing economies must accelerate. At the same time, disparities in prevailing poverty rates both within and between countries will require targeted attention." (*A/56/1, para. 129*)

We hope that the United Nations will work actively towards establishing a new international economic order featuring equal cooperation and common development, so as to ensure that economic globalization benefits the international community as a whole. We also hope that the United Nations will work to change the situation in which international economic affairs are in most cases undemocratically dominated by a few countries and to reform the international financial and trade system so as to ensure the equal participation of developing countries.

At the same time, developed countries should, in consideration of their long-term interests, take concrete steps to open markets, transfer technologies, increase their official development assistance to developing countries and reduce or cancel the latter's debts, so as to create conditions conducive to their own sustained development in the future. Furthermore, the United Nations and the rest of the international community should take real action to meet the special needs of the least developed countries, the African countries in particular, and help them to strengthen their capacity-building, eradicate poverty and tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS. Efforts should be made to expand the existing debt reduction and cancellation initiatives and to provide market access with more favourable terms to developing countries.

The Millennium Declaration set many specific goals and developed countries made many pledges in this regard at the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, which was held earlier this year. We appeal to the international community to join hands to realize these goals, to which developed countries in particular should make positive contributions.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am still terribly moved by the events that took place last week in this city and Washington. I must begin by expressing my country's solidarity with the Government and people of the United States, victims of an insane demonstration of terrorism. We hope that this global scourge, of which all countries represented here are potential victims, will for that reason be a factor for cohesiveness and cooperation in our implacable struggle to eliminate it.

We would like to address the report of the Secretary-General by beginning with the paragraph that refers to activities of the Organization relating to the elimination of terrorism, although I will make additional comments later in the debate on this issue.

Universal or regional conventions, existing or under negotiation, that establish ways and means to eliminate various forms of terrorism may have seemed to us until now to be sufficient response. We certainly should ensure the broadest implementation of those that are in force and do everything possible so that the two conventions that are currently being negotiated are concluded and, if possible, adopted during this session. Still, we should ask whether traditional legal instruments are the proper response to the challenge that the terrorists have placed before humanity. We think that new approaches should be sought to achieve more effective results and to encourage all Governments to participate in this combat, which cannot be won unless all are firmly determined to implement together the measures that will lead to the prevention and final elimination of terrorism.

Strengthening international cooperation is also necessary to combat two other global enemies of humanity — poverty and the deterioration of the environment. We note that the United Nations continues to devote considerable resources to the fight against poverty and that its agencies are working together to promote the development of developing countries. However, the results have been meagre. Perhaps the time has come to explore other strategies and ways and means that would make it easier to achieve more satisfactory results.

Meanwhile, our expectations and hopes are placed on the upcoming conferences, that of the World Trade Organization in Doha and that on financing for development in Mexico next year. We hope, inter alia, that these conferences will bring us closer to a real liberalization of international trade, which is a goal that developing countries have sought for so long, convinced that in the long run the elimination of protectionism will benefit everyone.

Uruguay notes with concern the slowness of progress in the less developed countries with regard to human and social development. Accordingly, we support the adoption of special measures that would help those countries, in particular measures that have been proposed in the political declaration and programme of action adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries last May. At the same time, we would like to draw attention to the fact that it is necessary not to overlook assistance to countries that, while not among the least developed, nonetheless confront serious problems that are delaying or paralysing their progress towards development. We must ensure that the development process in those countries does not regress for lack of assistance, which could increase the number of least developed countries. There were 23 of least developed countries in 1971, 34 in 1981, 46 in 1991 and 49 in 2001. We must prevent any increase in this number.

The third great global enemy is the deterioration of the environment. The Secretary-General's report leads us to two conclusions. First, the health of the planet is not improving. Rather, it is evolving in a way that is going to lead us, in the terms employed in the report, to "potentially devastating results for human development and the welfare of all species" (*A/56/1, para. 173*). My delegation has carefully considered the weight of this apocalyptic terminology, which is a very clear sign of the seriousness of the situation.

The second conclusion is that if we are moving towards the aforementioned disaster, it is not because we do not know what should be done. In the last 30 years, environmental legislation, both national and international, has proliferated in an extraordinary manner. But we are now facing our old enemy — ourselves. Conventions are not ratified, or, if they are ratified, they are not implemented. The declarations and resolutions are piling up and are forgotten. Everything is turning into a dead letter as States refuse to fulfil their obligations. If there is no change in attitude on our part, we will leave to future generations the threatened and insecure world we now live in. It is in our hands to change it.

Paragraphs 88 and 89 of the report of the Secretary-General give us, in a concise synthesis, a discouraging account of the situation in the world vis-à-vis the serious problems threatening international peace and security, which affect the well-being of all of humanity. Some of these problems result from natural disasters. Others, which constitute the majority, result from conflicts caused by human beings. This has led this Organization to stretch to the limits its ability to deal with these problems by means of humanitarian assistance and deploying peacekeeping operations. The humanitarian work of the United Nations to deal with crises caused by natural disasters and other emergencies is praiseworthy, particularly if one takes into account the endemic lack of sustained financing available to deal with the dizzying increase in refugees, internally displaced persons and victims in general. To this we must often add restrictions on reaching affected areas and security problems for humanitarian staff. We note with concern that there are serious deficiencies in this humanitarian response from the United Nations, owing to a lack of money and what the Secretary-General called "insufficient efforts by some agencies in their designated areas" (*ibid., para. 95*). We also would have liked to have had some more information about this point, as well as about what measures the Secretary-General should have adopted to make up for those shortcomings.

During the previous session we emphasized the fact that we must shore up the information and analysis services of this Organization. In his report on the prevention of armed conflicts (A/55/985), the Secretary-General considers progress that has been achieved in this connection and puts forward some recommendations to increase current efforts. These activities deserve our firmest support and should continue until the United Nations can affirm that it receives all information relating to situations, events and trends that may have international repercussions, early enough so that it can take preventive measures.

We note with satisfaction that the Secretary-General has already commenced a process to improve the United Nations capacity to maintain peace and has adopted or intends to adopt a series of measures listed in paragraph 45 of the report. The Secretary-General nonetheless warns that insofar as Africa is concerned, the increase in the peacekeeping capabilities of African countries should not lead to a reduction in the participation of States from other regions in peacekeeping operations on that continent.

My country — which is a major contributor of troops and equipment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and whose civilian and military observers participate in many other operations in Africa and elsewhere — welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General to set up effective support structures for the thousands of individuals who daily risk their lives in increasingly dangerous situations where the protection of the civilian population, especially women and children, is of special importance.

But, as a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, Uruguay is alarmed by the diminished availability of resources for peacekeeping operations in Africa. Contingents from my country have taken on an extremely significant role in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in guaranteeing greater security and safety for the civilian population and to ensure the peaceful reopening of river routes. Accordingly, we view as highly appropriate the appeal of the Secretary-General and of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for strengthened cooperation and coordination throughout the system.

Mr. Sun (Republic of Korea): Regrettably, I will be beginning my statement on a sad note. Almost two weeks have elapsed since the horrific terrorist attack of 11 September, but the wound it has inflicted on the host country is so deep that we all remain profoundly traumatized to this day. Therefore, I think it only appropriate briefly to share my thoughts on terrorism at the outset.

The terrorist attack, which occurred on the opening day of this session of the General Assembly, sent terrifying shock waves throughout the whole world and caught people across the globe by surprise. We must stand very firm in fighting such terrorist attacks, as they pose a threat not only to the United States but to the entire international community.

We commend the prompt action taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council in adopting resolutions condemning the attack in the midst of an unanticipated disruption of the meeting schedule. My delegation hopes that the United Nations will continue to play a central role in eliminating international terrorism.

We will further elaborate on our position on terrorism at the forthcoming plenary meeting devoted to that subject, but I would like to make one point clear: any one of us could fall victim to terrorism at any moment. Thus, this kind of terrorism constitutes a self-destructive affront to the dignity and civilization of mankind, and should be punished and eliminated by all means.

Let me now turn to our main topic, namely the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). What made the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly unique was the fact that it was shaped largely by the Millennium Summit. Indeed, the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration has been the main topic of our deliberations throughout the United Nations system over the past year, and much of the work of the United Nations has been carried out in the context of follow-up to the Millennium Summit.

Naturally, one would assume that our discussion of agenda item 10, on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, would centre on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit. However, in addition to the annual report, this year we also have the report entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326), which was released last week. As the roadmap report offers a concrete programme of action to meet the ambitious objectives outlined in the Millennium Declaration, I look forward to discussing the follow-up measures at some point in the future.

Before commenting on some of the issues addressed in the annual report, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General. The election of Mr. Kofi Annan to a second term testifies to his exemplary guidance of the world body over the past five years. I have no doubt that, with the well-earned trust of the international community and with his outstanding vision and leadership, Mr. Annan will continue successfully to lead the United Nations for another five years.

I find it highly encouraging that Member States have pledged on many occasions, including at the Millennium Summit, to move the activities of the United Nations in the field of international peace and security from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. In that context, my delegation welcomes the collective will of all Member States to further develop the capacity of the United Nations to address the root causes of conflicts.

We highly appreciate that, following a comprehensive review, during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, a sincere effort to implement the report's recommendations is now under way. Owing to the multifaceted nature of today's conflicts, it is extremely difficult to find a simple, universally applicable solution. Therefore, I think it appropriate that the Secretary-General should continue to increase interdisciplinary fact-finding missions and dispatch special envoys and representatives to their respective regions, while encouraging regional organizations to play a more active role in that endeavour. We welcome the renewed efforts of the United Nations to seek multidisciplinary, integrated approaches to conflict prevention, and we note that there has been remarkable progress in that area.

In my own region, the full support of Member States for the historic inter-Korean summit, expressed through resolution 55/11, adopted by consensus at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, contributed to the advancement of peace on the Korean peninsula. With that support, the Republic of Korea will continue to exert efforts to advance the process of peace and reconciliation. We appreciate the Secretary-General's continued interest in this process on the peninsula, most recently reflected in his statement welcoming the resumption of ministerial talks between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. My delegation welcomes his expressed resolve to search for ways and means to contribute to inter-Korean rapprochement and other positive developments on the Korean peninsula.

In the field of disarmament, we share the Secretary-General's assessment that the level of international cooperation in disarmament remains disappointingly low. But since multilateral disarmament negotiations are largely contingent on the current international security situation, we should not lose sight of the virtues of patience and optimistic thinking. In that context, my delegation hopes that the First Committee's deliberations will proceed in a more constructive manner.

In the field of development, the unanimous adoption of the Millennium Declaration last year

signalled a high-level political commitment on international development assistance and environmental advancement. I commend the leading role taken by the United Nations in this field over the course of the past year.

Of particular note are two follow-ups to historic events made in the field of United Nations-led international economic cooperation: the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the special session of the General Assembly on human settlements. I am also pleased with the success of the preparatory processes for the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

I believe that a focused approach to development issues, with an emphasis on bridging the digital divide and promoting development in Africa, deserves consideration. In addition, I find the United Nations efforts under the leadership of the Secretary-General to strengthen its relations with the Bretton Woods institutions and the private sector to be very timely and relevant. I hope that further progress will materialize in this relatively new field of cooperation.

As we approach such significant international events as the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, I hope that the discussion of economic and environmental issues during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly will be more vitalized than ever before.

The United Nations has made great headway in the area of human rights with the adoption of the optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, the recent special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development, as well as the special sessions on Habitat and HIV/AIDS, have further strengthened the role of the United Nations in enhancing human rights and social development around the world.

The special session on children has been postponed in the aftermath of the terrorist attack of 11 September. But we have no doubt that the momentum generated throughout the preparatory process will be maintained, so that when it does eventually take place, the special session will prove to be an important milestone in the international effort to make this a world fit for children.

I greatly appreciate the humanitarian assistance delivered by the United Nations humanitarian agencies during the past year, and welcome improved coordination within the humanitarian community. As this year marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of a humanitarian assistance mechanism within the United Nations, more focus needs to be placed on the comprehensive assessment of humanitarian activities and on the possible reorganization of those mechanisms.

Securing sufficient funds is essential for the successful operation of humanitarian activities. Member States should pay special attention to the current trend of decreased funding, and the Secretariat should explore avenues to optimize the allocation of resources to agencies.

Finally, let me briefly touch upon the topic of global partnership. It is noteworthy that this year's report deals with partnership in a separate chapter. The allocation of a separate chapter for this issue reflects the growing realization within the United Nations system of the ever-increasing importance of forging global partnerships with civil society: the business community, academia and non-governmental organizations.

By incorporating input and resources from civil society into its own work, the United Nations can become more meaningful and accountable to the general public. In this regard, we commend this year's approach and hope it will continue in the years ahead.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/56/1. The reference in that report to an international panorama characterized by strong contrasts between encouraging events and dangerous threats was unfortunately confirmed two weeks ago with the reappearance of international terrorism in its most ferocious expression. This can only merit our condemnation and our solidarity with the victims and the Government and people of the United States.

That brutal event confirms that it is necessary to strengthen the United Nations, as the sole universal

body capable of dealing with the new challenges before mankind. That unfortunate event has dramatically demonstrated that despite all the levels of communication and trade caused by globalization, despite all that none of the critical questions before us can be resolved in an exclusively national environment, as was correctly noted by the Secretary-General.

The yearly debate of the report of the Secretary-General provides us with the opportunity to think generally and clearly about the broad range of subjects covered by the tasks of our Organization, avoiding falling in the almost inevitable fragmentation that accompanies specific consideration of every item. Our primary consideration is directed at the importance of maintaining the perspective on the existing dynamic between peace and security and human rights and development.

At the past Millennium Assembly, the President of the Republic of Argentina, Fernando de la Rua, emphasized the relationship between poverty and conflicts and between the lack of development and instability, noting the need to attack the profound causes of many current crises. In that regard, we feel that it is necessary to continue the efforts of the Organization and Member States to eliminate poverty. Furthermore, it is our understanding that only stable national societies can provide the cement for an international order in which peace and security reign.

In order to achieve those societies, beyond the necessary economic and social development, we agree with the Secretary-General that it is important to preserve respect for popular sovereignty, the responsibility of the authorities, respect for the rights and fundamental guarantees of individuals and the rule of law. It is on the basis of democratic, plural and tolerant national societies that the rule of law will be respected in international relations. Thus, we note our concern about the existing gap between human rights norms and their implementation, and we commend the work of the Commission on Human Rights to fill this gap in order to ensure that there will be universal respect for human rights.

We strongly support the Secretary-General's emphasis on preparing a plan of action for peace-building. We believe that a culture for preventing conflict that will take into account social, economic and political problems in a broad way will be one of the most effective tools for ensuring fulfilment of the goals of the United Nations regarding peace and security.

With regard to peacekeeping, we support the establishment of realistic mandates based on a common strategy, and we reiterate our support for the tasks that are carried out by the Organization's peacekeeping operations. Argentina will continue to participate in such operations, as we have been doing for the past 50 years, despite the restrictions imposed by our current financial difficulties.

In the field of disarmament, my country will continue tirelessly to advocate that all States give up their weapons of mass destruction and work actively to ensure strict compliance with their obligations under various treaties in this area so that the application of such treaties can become universal.

We are also concerned about the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional arms, in particular small arms. We will therefore continue to support progress in this field through the speedy implementation of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted in July.

In the humanitarian sphere, I would like to reiterate the deep appreciation of the Argentine Republic for the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the various agencies within the United Nations system that deal with humanitarian issues. At the same time, I would like to express my Government's concern about the fact that attacks on humanitarian personnel are continuing and convey our condolences to and express our solidarity with the families and friends of those who have been attacked.

We believe that protection must be increased for civilians in armed conflict, who continue to be the main and innocent target of such attacks. Many of such victims are among the most vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced persons, women and children. Now is the time to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General, in particular the most urgent ones, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000).

We believe that the Secretary-General is right to have singled out the International Criminal Court and the International Tribunals in his reports in recent years

in the chapter dealing with the international legal order and human rights. Argentina participated fully and on an ongoing basis in the international effort that began several years ago to develop an International Criminal Court as a legal means of filling the vacuum that currently exists with regard to bringing criminals to trial and suppressing crime. We look forward to the entry into force of the statute of the Court and commit ourselves to supporting the actions of the Court in the future.

Furthermore, my country would like to express its satisfaction with the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; we hope that the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child will also enter into force soon. We would also like to express our approval of the Commission on Human Rights resolution on access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, as the Secretary-General has done in his report.

With regard to sustainable development, we support the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and have been actively participating in that process at the regional and global level. We offer our unreserved support for the strengthening of the multilateral regimes for environmental protection.

Finally, with regard to the functioning of the Organization, we believe that the adoption, after lengthy and often difficult negotiations, of a resolution on comprehensive human resources reform, is, together with the decisions taken in relation to the reform of the scale of assessments, one of the most important decisions adopted during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. This will give the Secretariat greater flexibility and improve its ability to manage human resources, while providing the necessary safeguards for staff members, who, as we stated when the issue was under consideration, are the most valuable asset of this Organization.

Mr. Manolo (Philippines): I would like first of all to congratulate the President on his well-deserved election. At the same time, I wish to convey my Government's deepest sympathies to the people of New York City and the United States for the barbaric terrorist attack launched almost two weeks ago.

My delegation would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive, substantive and timely report on the work of the Organization. In view of the limited speaking time, however, I will confine my remarks to just some of the issues raised in the report.

Chapter I of the Secretary-General's report starts by describing his effort to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We endorse this effort because, in our view, the best way to respond to crises is to spot them before they occur. Conflict prevention, by definition, is the most efficient approach to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, conflict prevention requires good intelligence work and analysis, and, ideally, must address the root causes of potential conflict. Conflict-prevention measures by the United Nations must also be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Charter and be sensitive to the historical background of the situations being addressed.

The Secretary-General also notes that in most cases the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations now include activities such as humanitarian relief, disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of combatants. This clearly demonstrates the necessity of institutionalized coordination and consultation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, especially with respect to mandates and resource requirements.

On nuclear disarmament, we must continue working for the universality of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Philippines is a party to these Treaties, and recently ratified the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, thus fulfilling our constitutional requirement of keeping the Philippines free from nuclear weapons. The international community must work towards implementing the Millennium Summit decision to deal with nuclear dangers in a comprehensive manner.

The uncontrolled spread and excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons ensure that pain, suffering and death continue throughout the world on a daily basis. We therefore welcome the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Philippines has adopted and implemented measures and explored

avenues of regional and international cooperation in line with the Programme's objectives. We thus look forward to the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, and urge Member States to heed the Secretary-General's call to continue to work on those issues on which consensus could not be reached and to act upon the key recommendations of the Conference.

Although the Secretary-General's report does not specifically devote a section to terrorism, such actions remain a threat to international peace and security. We must therefore urgently advance our work in the United Nations on terrorism. We look forward to next week's debate as a catalyst for such work.

We also share the Secretary-General's support for the continued development of the concept of targeted sanctions so as to address the adverse effects of sanctions on innocent people.

My delegation wishes to emphasize the importance of cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of such organizations to respond to natural disasters. At the same time, humanitarian responses to protect civilians affected by armed conflict require the active cooperation of the parties concerned and of international actors. Nevertheless, humanitarian actions address the consequences of disasters and not their causes. Humanitarian action should not be a substitute for addressing the causes of a conflict.

The report's chapter on cooperating for development echoes the Millennium Summit's resolve to wage war on poverty, to make the right to development a reality for all, and to render globalization inclusive and equitable. In this regard, we agree with the Secretary-General that economic growth in developing countries must accelerate if development and poverty eradication are to be achieved.

We welcome the growth in membership of the United Nations Development Group, with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recently joining. Greater coordination will lead to more effective delivery of development assistance.

We strongly believe that the financing for development process should result in a new, holistic development cooperation framework that is backed by strong political will and adequate financial resources.

We will do our utmost to contribute to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010. We call on the United Nations system to play a catalytic role in mobilizing resources for the cause of African development.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held next year, alleviating global poverty and ensuring a better future for succeeding generations should underscore our review of the progress of the implementation of the commitments arising from the Rio Conference.

We are glad to note that the Secretary-General prioritizes the need to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Philippines recognizes the responsibility to help develop their abilities and integrate them into the mainstream of society.

My Government is also committed to advancing the economic, social and political status and the rights of women. Gender inequality needs to be addressed in the United Nations with a view to empowering women.

The problems encountered by women migrant workers are also of special concern. We hope that this session will take the appropriate action to combat violence against women migrant workers.

The Secretary-General's report focuses on administrative and management reform and on the budgetary discipline of the United Nations. We support efforts to use efficiently the Organization's human and financial resources, but we should not lose sight of the need to strengthen the policy contributions of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, to international peace, security and development — hence the importance of revitalizing the General Assembly and reforming the Security Council.

Finally, last session's resolution on the revitalization of the General Assembly seeks to facilitate the implementation of the decision contained in General Assembly resolution 51/241, which invites the President of the General Assembly to assess our debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. We hope that the President will be in a position to take action, as appropriate, on this matter during this session.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his valuable report on the work of the Organization during the past year. I should like also to take this opportunity to thank him for his tireless efforts in the service of the purposes and principles of the United Nations — be they political, diplomatic or related to social and economic development or any other issues of great importance to the international community.

It is not strange that the criminal terrorist attacks committed against the United States on 11 September should cast a dark shadow on any international dialogue that might occur subsequently, particularly under the auspices of the United Nations, because of the expected impact they will have on the international agenda in the near future.

The problems, crises and conflicts that the Secretary-General's report deals with — which were known to the international community before 11 September — will most likely continue to be with us for a long time. However, we cannot underestimate the repercussions of these terrorist acts on the manner in which we deal — individually or collectively — with some of these crises. This terrorist attack against a major global Power means, from a multilateral perspective, that there is a real structural fault in the collective security system established by the founding fathers of the United Nations.

A collective effort accompanied by serious, creative reflection will be required in order to rectify the situation. We will also need to intensify our efforts to address adequately the root causes of conflicts, which give rise to destructive terrorist attacks such as the ones we have seen. Moreover, we must enhance our response and coordination in the area of conflict prevention. All of this should be done, of course, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's report deals with many of the crisis situations confronting the world at this time. I should like briefly to comment on some of these issues.

Let me first mention the praiseworthy efforts made by the Secretary-General, along with other world leaders, to contain the explosive situation in the Middle East, which is a result primarily of the continued Israeli military occupation of the Palestinian territories. Egypt encourages the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts and contacts with all concerned influential parties to prevent any further escalation of the conflict in this vital region of the world, especially in view of the extremely tense situation now prevailing.

Secondly, the international community — represented by the United Nations system — must translate its stated interest in the security and stability of Africa and the prosperity of its people into specific and tangible measures that lead to concrete results. It must also monitor and assess the effectiveness of the various measures that have been previously announced for providing support to Africa.

It is also important that everyone realize that Africa, in endorsing the New African Initiative at the Lusaka Summit, has set out its priorities and devised a short-, medium- and long-term road map for action, according to which the international community can take steps, within the framework of full partnership with the countries of that continent, to translate the interest shown in Africa into a tangible and concrete reality. This would help to extinguish the flames of conflict and promote respect for democracy and good governance in the African countries, as well as enable the peoples of those countries to share in the financial and development fruits of globalization, benefits of which they have been deprived.

Thirdly, there is no doubt that human rights issues are an important cornerstone in today's world. The Secretary-General notes in his report that a wide gap exists between human rights standards on the one hand and their implementation on the other. This is, of course, a matter that continues to pose a tremendous challenge to the United Nations. In fact, this gap is of serious concern not only to the United Nations but also to the international community as a whole. This will require more intensive efforts to promote a wide range of human rights, so that they are not limited to civil and political rights only but also include, on an equal footing, economic, social and cultural rights as well as the right to development.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General's report reflects international undertakings in the area of disarmament. Paragraph 75 refers to a continuing divergence of views among States on priorities in the field of disarmament. We have noted this divergence in the positions of a limited number of States, among which are the five nuclear Powers.

We underscore, along with the great majority of States, our commitment to the priorities in the field of disarmament, as clearly reflected in the final document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, in which nuclear disarmament was given absolute priority, followed by all other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

We stress that these agreed priorities will continue to guide our work until the goals are achieved. However, we note with concern that this difference in priorities, though limited, has started to negatively impact international efforts towards disarmament and to undermine any potential achievements in this vital field.

Fifthly, my delegation emphasizes that eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development for all is the joint responsibility of countries of both the North and the South alike. While we welcome a human rights-based approach to our cooperative effort to combat poverty, any such approach will continue to be inadequate if it is limited to the national level and disregards the international level or the implications of the lack of democracy in the mechanisms of economic decision-making at the international level. This situation has contributed to the growing economic gap between States. Therefore, it is important that our approach be guided by what was agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration: the importance of good governance at the national and international levels.

Sixthly, on the issue of youth employment opportunities, we are convinced that there is an urgent need to find appropriate employment opportunities for more than 70 million young men and women, as stated in various reports by the Secretary-General. I would like to mention that Egypt will be hosting the Youth Employment Summit, to be held in Alexandria in September 2002, which will deal with the different means and strategies for providing employment for youth. I call upon all States to contribute, through their effective participation, to making this unprecedented meeting a success and to finding permanent and practical solutions to this problem, which has become a source of concern for developing and developed countries alike.

These were my dele_ation's comments on some of the issues dealt with by the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. We once more thank the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their efforts in the service of Member States in realizing the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate the President on his election, and greet and congratulate his colleagues in the Bureau.

New York and Washington, D.C., were attacked with cruelty and insanity. The attacks were attacks on the principles and purposes of our Organization, and on the Inter-American System. So all the countries of America, meeting in Washington recently, took measures to pursue, arrest, bring to justice, punish and swiftly extradite all terrorists.

Peru has also called on the Inter-American System to adopt a convention against terrorism. Peru, which for over a decade has suffered the aberrations of terrorism, with 25,000 dead and thousands of millions of dollars in material damage, will always fight terrorism. The terrorist acts were among the most brutal examples of violations of human rights, international law and civilized life. They were an attack on all fundamental freedoms and on the very bases of our democracies.

Peru has absolutely no doubt of the urgent need to take decisive action to eliminate terrorism through the united efforts of the entire international community. Peru regards it as extremely important that we complete as soon as possible our negotiation of a United Nations convention against international terrorism, and that all States accede to the various sectoral conventions approved by the United Nations to combat terrorism.

I congratulate the Secretary-General on his report and on the important steps taken by the United Nations this past year in discharging its responsibilities for the preservation of international peace and stability and for promoting the development and well-being of all peoples. As it has stated before, my delegation is firmly committed to action to strengthen the United Nations capacity for strategic, normative and operational planning of peacekeeping. We encourage all the efforts to achieve final consensus on the recommendations in the Brahimi report. We hope that this consensus will come about and that the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention will be implemented as soon as possible.

We agree on the need to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention, with adequate mechanisms to deal with the root causes of conflict. We believe that regional and subregional approaches can be very useful in achieving effective strategies to resolve complex emergency situations. The strategies must have very clear foundational concepts and operational plans.

We are convinced that in order to achieve this culture of conflict prevention, we must use as efficiently as possible the limited resources available to the Organization. We must safeguard budgetary stability, and avoid putting unsustainable financial pressures to bear on poor countries. The recent revision of the scale of assessments for the apportionment of peacekeeping expenses has meant a significant increase in contributions for developing countries, including Peru.

Above all, a culture of conflict prevention means that expenditures on weapons must be cut, that the dangers associated with arms build-ups must be eliminated, and that resources must be allocated to progressively eradicate poverty. There is no doubt that we must make progress in that regard. We must finally begin to engage in international cooperation on arms control within the context of the United Nations. Such cooperation is also important for the world's developing regions. Peru has introduced an initiative to freeze offensive weapons in South America, and is now holding talks with friendly countries. We believe that arms control in South America is one of the elements necessary to combat poverty.

Because of its direct relation to illicit drug-trafficking, urban violence and the self-sustaining nature of violent conflicts, we must continue to pay special attention to illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference held last July was certainly an important step forward in the right direction, but we believe it is the absolute minimum that must be done. It must now be supplemented through negotiations on internationally binding instruments that will help to track small arms and light weapons and to regulate brokerage activities.

The Organization cannot — and, indeed, must not — try to assume for itself the responsibility countries have for building a solid foundation for their development and stability. Peru realizes that the greatest responsibility of States is to build a dynamic and vigorous private sector and a free and democratic society in which there is full respect for and enjoyment of human rights, good governance, the rule of law and free and fair elections. This belief stems from our own experience; for, as the Secretary-General has noted, we had to struggle to preserve our democratic order and institutions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations for the support given to us in the holding of our general elections in May 2001.

There is no option other than to respect human beings. But human rights in many parts of the world are being violated with unprecedented barbarity. We hope that the recommendations on the protection of civilians in armed conflict made to the Security Council by the Secretary-General in his report will be duly considered and implemented. We must strengthen the international political and legal framework to provide better protection for civilians and to ensure that armed groups respect international humanitarian law.

It should be the moral and legal obligation of all Member States of the Organization to recognize that there can be no impunity for those responsible for war crimes or systematic violations of human rights. I am pleased to announce that Peru has just ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, demonstrating our strong commitment to United Nations efforts to strengthen international law and provide full protection for people's basic freedoms and rights.

The greatest challenge facing the international community in the twenty-first century is the eradication of poverty. Over 4 billion men and women are today living on $2 to $3 per day. What kind of global market can there be under those conditions? How can international conflicts be avoided in those circumstances? We agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his report on the work of the Organization that combating poverty involves various components, ranging from improving access to social services, gender equality and respect for human rights to access to information and communications technologies. We also agree with the Secretary-General's comments with regard to health. It is clear that no other problem has as negative an impact on the future of so many peoples as HIV infection and its related diseases.

The Secretary-General has described some of the encouraging measures taken by the United Nations system. However encouraging they might be, those actions fall very short of meeting the needs of most poor countries. Just meeting the main goals set at the Millennium Summit would require an additional $50 billion annually, another $4 billion per year for humanitarian assistance and an extra $20 billion to meet the needs of the world's public works. We certainly face an enormous challenge that can be met only when the world begins to understand that we are one human race. That will not be easy, but it is imperative.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly by giving special thanks to the Secretary-General for the preparation and presentation of his report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1).

At the outset, I should like to reiterate our sincere sorrow and condolences for the terrorist attack that occurred on 11 September and our solidarity with the people and Government of the United States, victims of the gravest assault on their security, human rights and right to peace. This event draws the attention of the United Nations and its membership to the need to adopt concrete and effective measures to ensure that those who committed and supported these terrorist acts are pursued and brought to justice and that we act together to eliminate this terrible scourge of humanity and to prevent any further terrorist acts against international peace and security.

In the constructive spirit that the States Members of this Organization must demonstrate at such times, I view with concern the fact that the Secretary-General's report does not sufficiently focus on the phenomenon of terrorism, despite its prevalence throughout the world. I wish to stress the fact that the Secretary-General's report mentions terrorism in a purely marginal way, while it ought to have contained an open and direct reference to the activities of the Secretariat and the United Nations in this regard so that mankind may remain alert to the meaning of terrorism and the serious international threat it poses. It is clear that this scourge exists and will continue to exist. Those of us representing our countries in the United Nations must demand even more of ourselves in this task, which requires effective tools and resources to combat.

Moreover, there can be no doubt that the United Nations has done important work over the past year in areas of great importance, the very pillars of its existence, such as peace and security, as reflected in the report. Various peacekeeping operations have been undertaken in States that have been seriously damaged politically, economically and socially by domestic conflict. The outstanding mediating function of the Secretary-General is also highlighted in the report. In this regard, we feel that the United Nations must enhance cooperation among its Member States and agencies, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society. It must also maintain close contact with regional and subregional entities for the prevention of conflict and the promotion of political stability.

The United Nations must also reiterate the commitment of Member States to defending, respecting and promoting human rights, which are essential to the construction of a peaceful world. Considerable efforts must be made to create machinery allowing the reduction of drug consumption, which not only affects the public health of consuming States, but also entails serious consequences for the public order of producing States, where the illegal traffic in drugs has destabilizing and corrupting repercussions.

Furthermore, as the Security Council determined recently under the presidency of Colombia, all Member States should commit themselves to eradicating the dangerous abundance of small arms and light weapons throughout the world, which imperils the national security of Member States and international security. More progress must be made in this respect, since the proliferation of and illegal trade in such weapons fans the fires of domestic conflicts. Colombia remains committed to working to that end and will encourage follow-up to the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which our country chaired last July.

The Colombian Government shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General that an immediate solution must be found to the domestic conflict in our country. That is why our Government remains committed to finding a peaceful solution to that conflict. Last year, significant progress was made towards that end, with the support of the international community, non-governmental organizations and civil society and with the assistance of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser. The Government of

Colombia has categorically and unequivocally supported direct dialogue with those groups. Talks leading to the signing of a peace agreement have been promoted by the Government, on the basis of respect for international humanitarian law and of the defence and promotion of human rights. My Government has made significant efforts to reduce violations of human rights, in compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law, international treaties and conventions and the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Colombia enjoys the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in its attempts to achieve that goal. We have also adopted a clear and determined policy against the production of and traffic in illicit drugs. We have sprayed drug crops and brought to justice those involved in that illicit trade. Our efforts, however, require greater commitment and solidarity on the part of the international community if we are to succeed and to advance in the current peace process.

Making globalization an equitable and inclusive phenomenon is one of the greatest challenges before the United Nations, as the Secretary-General acknowledges in his report. There can be no doubt that if the international community is to achieve its objectives of development and eradicating poverty, as set forth in the Millennium Declaration, there must be accelerated economic development in developing countries that have been affected by a large population increase, inadequate social and economic development, and internal conflicts.

We must promote relevant economic, social and financial policies based on cooperation and solidarity. We must strengthen support institutions nationally and internationally and promote international machinery allowing us to undertake special measures to promote development activities in those countries, such as strengthening agricultural policies, assistance for crop replacement, appropriate food assistance to alleviate hunger, the provision of technical assistance with a view to facilitating the reintegration of displaced persons, and the rehabilitation of communities affected by crises by establishing social, economic and political initiatives.

There can be no doubt that these social objectives, an essential component of humanitarian efforts, are all implicated in the eradication of poverty. Through its operational activities, the United Nations must continue to provide leadership in promoting better access to basic social services and health care. It must also promote gender equality and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It must also ensure that human rights are respected, facilitate the good management of public affairs and expand access to information and communication technologies. States must work more closely together and cooperate to ensure that the humanitarian management of the Organization is effective and efficient.

I must also stress another topic that has not been addressed in the Secretary-General's report: the financial situation of the Organization. An outstanding achievement was registered late last year with the negotiation of assessments, imposing financial obligations and greater responsibilities on Member States. New assessments were made for the regular budget and a scale was established for the peacekeeping operation budget that did not exist before. Defining these scales was, without doubt, a great event that will require the establishment of certain guidelines for future conduct so that our Organization can be economically and financially more solid.

I must conclude by affirming that the United Nations must continue its efforts to build a world in which order and justice and respect of States for international law prevail. I also believe that the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, should continue its work to reduce the gap between human rights norms and their implementation and to promote the necessary action to ensure ratification of the Organization's fundamental treaties on human rights.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.